

with the rank of a seaman as a part of an air flight crew in the Navy. Despite the challenges, sacrifices, and hardships they faced while defending this Nation, these women voluntarily stepped forward and put service above self to preserve our freedoms. We cannot thank them enough for their tremendous courage and their sacrifices.

Showing our appreciation to those who have served is something that we should do each and every day, but today is a special day to pay tribute and thank those who have volunteered to put their lives on the line for our freedoms. The memorials our Honor Flight participants will visit today serve as an important reminder to us all that our freedoms and liberties come at a steep cost. However, I know our veterans will find special meaning and potentially long-lost emotions when they tour such touching sites.

The brave West Virginia heroes today have all served this country in a variety of ways, working both at home and abroad. They have engaged in combat all over the world, traveling to the Panama Canal, working on the docks of Saigon, and serving in historic events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis. One of our visiting Vietnam veterans, Stephen Douglas Phillips of New Martinsville, earned not just one, but two Purple Hearts. Another, Gary Curtis Harold of Shady Spring has received both a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star.

But regardless of their rank or duty, each and every one of these veterans answered our Nation's call and has served with incredible pride and valor.

Additionally, I would like to recognize the nine volunteers, or so-called "guardians," who have accompanied the veterans during their trip today. These guardians have selflessly given their time to travel alongside our veterans all the way from Princeton, WV to Washington, DC to share this very special journey with them.

I am also tremendously grateful for all those involved in the Always Free Honor Flight Network, especially the president of the Denver Foundation and owner of Little Buddy Radio in Princeton—Dreama Denver. Along with coordinator and executive assistant, Dreama launched the Always Free Honor Flight and has planned four trips within a 2-year span for our West Virginia veterans. I commend Dreama, Pam, and all the Denver Foundation staff for their dedication and commitment to West Virginia's large veteran population. They have offered the people in West Virginia just one more way to say thank you' to our veterans for their service and sacrifice.

I am filled with pride every time I meet the patriots who have served our country, and I am so pleased to welcome West Virginia's most courageous veterans, who are all heroes, to Washington, DC. I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in saluting them. They truly inspire us all as we are reminded of their selfless service. It is because of their bravery that all Amer-

icans enjoy the greatest liberties and freedoms in the world.

God bless all our servicemembers and veterans, God bless the great State of West Virginia, and God bless the United States of America.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. CHARLES MONELL

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Dr. Charles Monell as he retires from the Rancho Mirage Library Advisory Commission after two decades of service and dedication to the library and the community it serves.

Throughout a long and distinguished career in medicine, including as the chief of surgery at the Beverly Glen Hospital in Los Angeles, Dr. Monell also gave generously of his time to a variety of charitable causes, especially those supporting music and education. Being particularly devoted to supporting public libraries, Dr. Monell served on the California State Library Commission for 14 years prior to retiring from medicine in 1992 and becoming a full-time resident of Rancho Mirage, which was working to establish its first public library.

In 1993, Dr. Monell was appointed to the Rancho Mirage Public Library Planning Committee, and led the effort to convert a former bank building into the first library. On January 6, 1996, as chairman of the new Rancho Mirage Public Library Commission, he introduced President Gerald Ford for the ribbon-cutting ceremony and formal opening of the Rancho Mirage Public Library.

The library was up and running, but Dr. Monell did not stop there. In 2003, he secured a gift of \$2 million from the Annenberg Foundation to purchase land for a new and larger Rancho Mirage Public Library, which opened on January 6, 2006—10 years to the day after the first library opening.

Dr. Monell has shared his lifelong love of music with the library and the community. With his personal contributions and fundraising efforts, he helped the library purchase a Steinway concert grand piano and sponsored concert performances by the acclaimed musicians of the Idyllwild Arts Academy. He has also donated his personal Civil War library to the Rancho Mirage Library, and generously made possible a private study room in the library for the community to use.

On May 12, the Library Advisory Commission honored Dr. Monell for his extraordinary devotion to the library and his 18 years of service on the commission. On June 5, Mayor Iris Smotrich will present Dr. Monell with a proclamation from the City of Rancho Mirage in appreciation of his distinguished service.

I am pleased to join them in saluting Dr. Charles Monell for his dedicated

and inspiring service to the community of Rancho Mirage.●

JOHNSTOWN FLOOD ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 125th Anniversary of the Johnstown Flood, one of the most unforgettable tragedies in our Nation's history. This anniversary reminds us of the delicacy of human life, the great importance of caring for others, and the true resilience that was demonstrated by those who endured the catastrophe.

At approximately 3:00 p.m. on Friday, May 31, 1889, the South Fork Dam, built to hold back a portion of the Conemaugh River, gave way, releasing 20 million tons of water into the valley below. The wall of water rushed towards the City of Johnstown, 15 miles to the southwest, picking up large quantities of debris and sweeping away whole towns. It finally hit Johnstown just after 4:00 p.m.

The flood event and ensuing typhoid outbreak claimed 10 percent of Johnstown's citizens; 2,209 people lost their lives, including 396 children and 99 whole families, resulting in the largest loss of civilian life in a single day until the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The tragedy left our Nation and larger global family in shock. The Johnstown Flood was the largest news story of its day and resulted in the single largest international humanitarian fundraising effort to date, with donations contributed from 13 countries. Clara Barton and five Red Cross workers arrived from Washington, DC, on June 5, 1889, making the Johnstown Flood the first major peacetime relief effort for the American Red Cross. Barton stayed until October 24, 1889, supervising the distribution of supplies and helping more than 25,000 people.

The Governor of Pennsylvania called on his constituents to rebuild and reopen the rail lines that had been wiped away. Within 14 days, 20 miles of railway reopened ensuring access to the lifesaving supplies arriving from the surrounding region.

During this anniversary we can recall these examples as just a few of countless stories of heroism. The survivors lived on to rebuild Johnstown. More importantly, they established a spirit of endurance that would live on in future generations.

The flood is a part of the history of Johnstown that will not be forgotten. The people of Johnstown and the Conemaugh Valley exhibit an indescribable human strength that rises above devastation and exhibits a true example of hope and determination during difficult times.●

CONGRATULATING CREEKVIEW HIGH SCHOOL

• Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, today I congratulate the Creekview High School rocketry team from Canton, GA who outperformed hundreds of